FORESTERY:

Forests are widely recognized as one of the land uses that provides the greatest protection for water quality and aquatic and wildlife habitat. As such, efforts to restore and conserve forests are an important part of nonpoint source pollution control.

Today, forests cover about 2.7 million acres of Maryland representing 40 percent of the state's total land area. Of this total, 2.4 million acres (90 percent) are classified as timberland. Timberland is defined as land growing at least 20 cubic feet (or the equivalent of twenty-four 2"x4"x8' framing studs) of wood on every acre each year with the potential of harvesting it. Examples of areas not classified as timberland include federal and state park land, Christmas tree farms, and forest set aside for scientific study.

Maryland's forests make a very direct and visible contribution to their economy. Every year, Maryland households spend over $454,000,000 on the many products produced from trees. Furniture alone accounts $170,000,000. Wages and salaries of individuals involved in the manufacture of goods and services in the wood industry amount to $327,840,000 annually. Indirect business taxes add up to $21,314,000 each year. The pulp and paper products industry alone employs 9300 people across the state.

As Maryland's population continues to grow and creates the need for additional development, Maryland will continue losing forest. Projections by the Maryland Office of Planning estimate that between 1990 and 2015, the area dominated by urban development will increase to 1.5 million acres. However, large-scale conversion of forests to developed land is not the only threat to Maryland's forests. Fragmentation, insects, disease, and exotic invasive plants, along with remote factors such as air pollution and acid deposition, have impacted the health of Maryland's forests. Although most of the deforested (i.e.-developed) lands will never return to their pristine forested condition, the preservation, conservation, and wise management of Maryland's remaining forests is vital for watershed health and renewable resources.

Forest health is inextricably linked to healthy streams and a robust Chesapeake Bay. Forests function as filters removing sediments, nutrients and other pollutants from water before they enter the groundwater system and receiving streams. Nutrients, for example, in normal quantities help maintain a healthy bay. The influx of excessive nutrients to the bay caused in part by changes in land use, however, has disrupted the Bay's ecosystem. Forests also regulate the amount, velocity, and rate of runoff maintaining a water body's natural hydrology. Forested riparian buffers along streams and rivers stabilize banks, reducing erosion and sedimentation. These riparian buffers also enhance aquatic habitat by shading streams, providing woody debris for in-stream structure, and regulating stream temperature. Protecting Maryland's forest resources will greatly contribute to nonpoint source pollution reductions.

Pursuant to CZARA Section 6217, Maryland state agencies and local governments are working to implement the ten management measures that were developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). These management measures are defined as economically achievable measures for the control of the addition of pollutants from existing and new categories and classes of nonpoint sources of pollution, which reflect the greatest degree of pollutant reduction achievable through the application of the best available nonpoint pollution control practices, technologies, processes, siting criteria, operating methods, or other alternatives. Specific information describing how Maryland is addressing these management measures can be found in the Nonpoint Source (NPS) Management Plan.